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MONTREAL, 1964

Photographs by

Henri Cartier-Bresson

TATE GALLERY MILLBANK

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Victoria & Albert Museum Loan Exhibition

London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 19 March - 27 April 1969
Sheffield: Graves Art Gallery, 14 June - 13 July 1969
York: City Art Gallery, 26 July - 17 August 1969
Leeds: City Art Gallery, 30 August - 21 September 1969
Eastbourne: Towner Art Gallery, 4 October - 26 October 1969
Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 8 November - 30 November 1969

Foreword

The distinction of Henri Cartier-Bresson's work as a photographer needs no argument. It was first honoured in an international museum retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1947. A score of other museums across the world have since followed that example and, indeed, last year the Museum of Modern Art went so far as to repeat its success with a second retrospective exhibition, which is currently on tour through North America. The selection in this instance, centred mainly on the photographer's output over the past ten years, was made by their Curator of Photography, Mr. John Szarkowski, and our own selection has been closely based on his, with certain additions. I am glad, therefore, to take this opportunity of acknowledging his help in this vital respect.
The preparation of this handlist and the arrangement of the exhibition have been the charge of Mr. Carol Hogben, Deputy Keeper of the Department of Circulation.

Hugh Wakefield

Keeper of the Department of Circulation
Victoria & Albert Museum

Introduction

Putting photographs in frames, and showing them on walls where paintings would more usually be hung, involves a certain risk of mistaking the medium. The primary existence of a painting is clearly in the unique physical object, fashioned by the artist himself. Any reproductive illustration of its image is merely some entirely secondary reference. It is the situation of most professional photographers today, however, that the *primary* existence of their work lies in its printed reproduction, whether in the pages of a book or in the so-called glossy magazines. The once-off enlargement, placed in a gallery exhibition, is in most cases purely a by-product of their work.

It is, of course, only natural, nor is it incorrect, to think of photography as essentially a visual art, one graphic medium among a number which the born visual artist can, if he wishes, choose to use. Yet this is not necessarily the most helpful assumption. In many ways the achievement of an outstanding reportage photographer such as Cartier-Bresson is far closer to that of a visually biased writer than to that of any "fine" graphic artist. It is precisely one of the things that distinguishes a practitioner of his rank that from looking at a body of his work one is able, without any difficulty at all, to apprehend the broad qualities of his mind—in this case, his compassion, his hatred of pretence, his sense of irony, his care of innocence. It is a mind far nearer to Turgenev, shall we say, than to a Toulouse-Lautrec

In at least one literal sense, it could be claimed of photography that it is the most strictly popular of all the arts. Millions practise it for themselves. Everybody, confronted with a photograph, feels he knows what he is looking at and what the subject is supposed to be. The sensation of recognition can be infinitely savoured, with enduring pleasure.

It ought not, moreover, to be forgotten that over a very long space in time it was a major function of the painting artist to be an acute observer of lived life, deft seizer of nuances, decisive catcher of revealing moments. Reading these, conversely, was a major process of appreciation on the part of the amateur. If, since about 1910, this function has substantially disappeared, or has been almost unrecognisably metamorphosed, it is largely because painters gradually came to accept that photographers could do it better. Thus, painters have moved off in other directions, the photographer is left standing in their emptied room, and some sections of the public feel in some way cheated of their former enjoyment.

Nonetheless, one has also got to admit that most people are intensely suspicious of any claim that photography be fully legitimated as an art. And it is easy enough to pick out some of the nerve-roots of this suspicion.

People feel firstly, inevitably, that any fool who clicks the button on a camera is bound to get some sort of graphic result, which may well be a very true, very interesting one. How can anyone possibly assess its merit? How could one ever separate the esteem which may be due to the photographer, to the superior qualities of his equipment or the sheer hazard of fortune? When we take a snapshot ourselves, are we to think of ourselves as being artists, too? Nobody likes to feel himself in an area where judgments can hardly so much as be attempted, and people worry over questions such as these. They worry, too (in perhaps another direction if in the same area), over the totally bewildering myriad bulk of photographic images that could be clamouring for assessment as an art. The scores of thousands of magazines, the millions of newspapers—each packed not simply with photographs but with a painfully selected cream of photographs—that are stuffed every day into the waste-baskets of the lands, how can one possibly scratch for art in such a territory? How does one even identify, let alone assess, the individual artist?

It is in this sort of context, I believe, that it may be more helpful to be thinking of photography as closer to writing than to graphic art. For the materials that a writer uses are common to everyone. Every

one of us strings sentences together from morning to night, but nobody gets in a trauma as to how one can possibly be expected to tell who is a fine professional writer and who is none. Indeed, in all those newspapers and magazines that get thrown away, no little fine writing, by undoubted artists, gets trashed in just exactly the same way as do the photographs.

It is, then, one value of an exhibition such as this that it gives people a much needed chance to look again, under a slightly different light, at some images which might well have disappeared for ever, which may yet seem to us infinitely worthy of preserving. It is rather like a publisher bringing out a series of old radio broadcasts in the form of a book.

More importantly, it gives us a chance not only to test out but actually to form appropriate standards of judgment based on the work of an acknowledged master. For that is how Cartier-Bresson can only properly be described.

In this field, as in any other, reputations are built first upon the regard of a man's fellow-professionals. Yet if it is these (or their accepted spokesmen, the professional critics) who have spelt out the first acknowledgment, it is always still the appreciation, easily enough found, of the general public that confirms the master. When we find ourselves looking at photographs such as these, the theoretical difficulty over forming soundly based judgments at least temporarily melts away.

This is no place for a searching review of his work which, after all, has been studied often enough. The particular area which Cartier-Bresson dominates today, and in the best sense exemplifies, is that of reportage or photo-journalism. His attitudes to his work have been both clearly and closely thought out, his own writings on the subject being as succinct as they are acute.

It would perhaps only be fair to point out that these attitudes were not reached without precedent. They had been evolved—having been made possible in the first place partly due to the technical development of handy sized cameras with wide angled lenses—through the work of German pioneers in the 1920s and early 1930s such as Felix Man, Dr. Erich Salomon and Wolfgang Weber. Nonetheless, no one in the end has been a more persuasive or consistent advocate than Cartier-Bresson for this role of the camera as rising above all others—beside which, indeed, all other roles have been made, largely by him, to seem either rather tepid or essentially frivolous.

C.H.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

1908	Born Chanteloup, near Paris, 22nd August.
1927/28	Studied painting with André Lhôte.
1929	Eight months in Cambridge, painting, literature studies.
1930	Military service, Le Bourget. Begins photography with Gretchen and Peter Powell.
1931	Travelled in Africa, lived Ivory Coast village; blackwater fever.
1932	Travelled in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, Italy. First serious photography, with Leica camera, using it to record what he saw and ignoring technique. First pictures published by André Vogel in *Vu*.
1933	Further travels in Italy, Spain. First exhibitions in Madrid, New York.
1934	Mexico. Exhibition Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.
1935	United States, second exhibition in New York.
1936	France. First film work, assistant to Jean Renoir on *Partie de Campagne*.
1937	Married Javanese dancer Ratna Mohini. Documentary film work in Republican hospitals, Spanish civil war.
1937	London, photographed coronation of King George VI.
1939	Again assistant to Jean Renoir, *La Règle du Jeu*.
1940	Corporal French Army Film Unit. Made prisoner-of-war on June Armistice Day; three years in camps in Baden-Württemberg. Escaped at third attempt to France and joined Resistance.
1944/45	War Correspondent, photographed Liberation, filmed return to France of prisoners and deportees.
1946/47	United States. Co-founder, with Robert Capa, David Seymour, George Rodger, of Magnum Photos international co-operative agency. Major exhibition Museum of Modern Art, New York.
1947/50	Travels in Middle East and Far East, photographing in India and Indonesia at the time of their achieving independence, and in China in the last six months of Kuomintang rule, as well as the first six months of Communist government; also Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, Iran, Irak, Syria, Egypt.
1949	U.S. Overseas Press Club "Best Photographic Reporting from Abroad" award (won also in 1955, 1960, 1964).
1954	First Western photographer to tour Russia when East-West relations restored.
1955	Major exhibition at Louvre in Paris, later toured through Europe, North America and Japan.
1958	Tour of China for tenth anniversary of People's Republic.
1960/64	Travels include Cuba, Canada, Mexico, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Turkey, Greece.
1965	Half year in Japan, half in India. Major exhibition in Tokyo, shown following year at Louvre.
1968	Second major exhibition, New York Museum of Modern Art, and U.S. tour.

List of Photographs

The list has been placed in approximate chronological sequence. Letters appearing beside individual serial numbers record the published works in which the photograph concerned has been reproduced—see short bibliography.

1 Paris, 1929
2 Paris, 1932
3 Place de L'Europe, Paris, 1932 *(abgh)*
4 Allée du Prado, Marseilles, 1932 *(bh)*
5 Christian Bérard, Paris, 1932 *(b)*
6 Brussels, 1932 *(agh)*
7 Gypsies, Alicante; Spain, 1932 *(ah)*
8 Barcelona, 1932
9 Fruitseller, Barcelona, 1933 *(bgh)*
10 Madrid, 1933 *(abgh)*
11 Blind boy in street, Valencia, 1933 *(abgh)*
12 Bullring, Alicante, 1933 *(agh)*
13 Cordova, Spain, 1933 *(agh)*
14 Seville, 1933 *(abh)*
15 Arsila, Spanish Morocco, 1933 *(ab)*
16 Tivoli, near Rome, 1933 *(abg)*
17 Prostitutes, Calle Cuauhtemocztin, Mexico City, 1934 *(bgh)*
18 Prostitute, Calle Cuauhtemocztin, Mexico City, 1934 *(b)*
19 Mexico, 1934
20 Mexico, 1934 *(abgh)*
21 Rome, 1934 *(h)*
22 Robert Flaherty, 1935 *(h)*
23 Sunday on the banks of the Marne, France, 1938 *(abgh)*
24 Recital, Hyde Park, London, 1937 *(bh)*
25 Coronation crowd, Trafalgar Square, London, 1937 *(abh)*
26 Coronation crowd, Trafalgar Square, London, 1937 *(abh)*
27 Outside the National Gallery, London, 1937 *(h)*
28 Henri Matisse, Vence, 1944 *(agh)*
29 Pierre Bonnard, Le Cannet, 1944 *(ah)*
30 Labour camp, Dessau, 1945. Repatriation being arranged, a Gestapo informer is accused by a fellow-prisoner *(abgh)*
31 Beaune, France, 1946
32 Iréne and Frédéric Joliot-Curie, 1946 *(agh)*
33 Jean-Paul Sartre, Paris, 1946 *(abgh)*
34 Saul Steinberg, 1946 *(bh)*
35 New York, 1946 *(h)*
36 Wall Street, New York, 1947 *(bgh)*
37 Harlem, New York; Easter, 1947 *(b)*
38 William Faulkner, Oxford, Mississippi, 1947 *(bgh)*
39 The Maharajah of Baria arriving for the ten days' ceremony of his marriage to the daughter of the Maharajah of Jaipur. India, 1948 *(b)*
40 Pandit Nehru at the funeral of Mahatma Gandhi, 1948 *(h)*
41 Shanghai, 1948. Queueing to buy gold in the currency collapse during the last days of the Kuomintang regime *(bgh)*
42 Teahouse, Peking, 1949 *(b)*
43 Peking, 1949 *(gh)*
44 Palni, South India, 1950 *(b)*
45 Bali, 1950 *(c)*
46 Bali, 1950 *(ch)*
47 Bali, 1950 *(c)*
48 Bali, 1950 *(c)*
49 Bali, 1950 *(c)*
50 Augustus John, 1950
51 Colette, 1952
52 Athens, 1953 *(fh)*
53 Eleusis Museum, Greece, 1953 *(f)*
54 Glyndebourne, 1953 *(fgh)*
55 Zurich, 1953 *(f)*
56 Segovia, Spain, 1953 *(f)*
57 The Kremlin, Moscow, 1954 *(f)*
58 Building workers' canteen, Moscow, 1954 *(fgh)*
59 GUM store, Moscow, 1954 *(e)*
60 ZIS factory, Moscow, 1954 *(e)*
61 First day in a new school, Moscow, 1954 *(eh)*
62 Exhibition, Moscow, 1954 *(eh)*
63 Sports Day, Moscow, 1954 *(eh)*
64 Sports Day, Moscow, 1954 *(e)*
65 Briançon, 1955 *(f)*
66 Sunday Morning, Paris, 1955 *(fg)*
67 Beaune, France, 1956
68 Holland, 1956 *(h)*
69 Centenarian, Sweden, 1957 *(h)*
70 Albert Camus, 1957
71 Max Ernst and his wife Dorothea Tanning, 1957 *(h)*
72 Museum, Peking, 1958 *(h)*
73 Peking, 1958 *(h)*
74 Gobi, China, 1958
75 New Orleans, 1958
76 Carl Jung, 1959
77 Lincoln Kirstein, 1959
78 Presidential election campaign, U.S.A., 1960
79 Kentucky, U.S.A., 1960 *(h)*
80 Champagne, 1960
81 General de Gaulle, Rodez, France, 1960
82 Louis Kahn, Philadelphia, 1962
83 Robert Kennedy, 1962
84 Jackson, Mississippi, 1962
85 Mississippi, 1962
86 Texas, 1962
87 Washington reception, 1962
88 Eton, 1962 *(h)*
89 Italy, 1962
90 Listening to General de Gaulle, France, 1962 *(h)*
91 Seine Bargees, France, 1962 *(h)*
92 Algerian demonstration, Paris, 1962 *(h)*
93 Naples Museum, 1962
94 Naples, 1963
95 Naples, 1963 *(h)*
96 The Berlin Wall, 1963 *(h)*
97 The Berlin Wall, 1963 *(h)*
98 Ireland, 1963
99 Dublin, 1963 *(h)*
100 New York, 1963
101 Alberto Giacometti, Paris, 1963 *(h)*
102 Greece, 1963 *(h)*
103 Greece, 1963
104 Popocatepetl, Mexico, 1963 *(h)*
105 Patzquaro, Mexico, 1963 *(h)*
106 Los Remedios, Mexico, 1963
107 Puebla, Mexico, 1963 *(h)*
108 Mexico, 1963
109 Mexico, 1963
110 Mexico, 1963/64
111 Mexico, 1963/64
112 Patzquaro, Mexico, 1964 *(h)*
113 Puebla, Mexico, 1964
114 Mexico, 1964
115 Mexico, 1964 *(h)*
116 Pierre-Jean Jouve, 1963/64 *(h)*
117 Samuel Beckett, 1964
118 Violette Leduc, 1964
119 J. M. G. le Clezio and his wife, 1964 *(h)*
120 François Mauriac, 1964 *(gh)*
121 Jean Rostand, 1964
122 Jean Genet, 1964
123 Ireland, 1964 *(h)*
124 Berlin, 1964 *(h)*
125 Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1964
126 Meudon, Paris, 1964 *(h)*
127 Jugoslavia, 1964 *(h)*
128 Jugoslavia, 1964/65 *(h)*
129 Jugoslavia, 1964/65
130 Montreal, 1964/65 *(h)*
131 Businessmen, Montreal, 1964 *(h)*
132 Lawyer, Quebec, 1965
133 Quebec, 1965
134 Canada, 1965
135 Orgosolo, Sardinia, c. 1965
136 Bed, 1965
137 Coco Chanel, 1965 *(h)*
138 Jugoslavia, 1965 *(h)*
139 Jugoslavia, 1965
140 Hungary, 1965 *(h)*
141 Mount Aso, Japan, 1965 *(h)*
142 Yawata, Japan, 1965
143 Tokyo, 1965 *(h)*
144 Nara, Japan, 1965
145 Kyoto, Japan, 1965 *(h)*
146 Tokyo, 1965 *(h)*
147 Fatehpur Sikri, India, 1966
148 Ahmedabad, India, 1966
149 Ahmedabad, 1966
150 Ahmedabad, 1966 *(h)*
151 Ahmedabad, 1966
152 Old Delhi, 1966 *(h)*
153 New Delhi, 1966
154 Cochin, South India, 1966
155 Ahmedabad, 1966
156 Ahmedabad, 1966
157 Zurich, 1966
158 Le Mans, 1966
159 Le Mans, 1966
160 Teheran, 1966
161 Mea Sharim, Jerusalem, 1967 *(h)*
162 U.S.A.F. jets, California, 1967
163 André Malraux, 1968
164 Jean-Paul Sartre, 1968
165 Charles Munch, 1968

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d D'Une Chine à L'Autre. Delpire, Paris, 1954
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e Moscou. Delpire, Paris, 1955
(The People of Moscow. Simon & Schuster; also Thames & Hudson)
f Les Européens. Verve, Paris, 1955
(The Europeans. Simon & Schuster)
g Photographies de Henri Cartier-Bresson. Delpire, Paris, 1963
(Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Grossman, New York; Cape, London)
h Flagrants-Délits. Delpire, Paris, 1968
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